



## SPEECH

E. JOY MORRIS, OF PENNSYLVANIA,

IN DEFENCE OF

*The Tariff of 1844, and the Protective Policy and American Labor;*

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, APRIL 24, 1844.

MR. SPEAKER: If there ever was a law imperatively called for by the necessities of the country, it was the Tariff act of 1842. When the 27th Congress met in Extra Session, in the summer of 1842, the country presented a scene of distress to which even the most disastrous periods of our history furnish an inadequate parallel. Not only had the active operations of trade ceased, and the pursuits of all classes of the people become embarrassed, but the Government itself was sinking beneath the weight of an increasing debt, which it had no resources to arrest or extinguish.

## ORIGIN OF THE TARIFF OF 1842.

In the eight years of the Administration of General Jackson and Mr. Van Buren, from 1831 to 1839, there was an excess of imports over exports of \$235,278,605. During these eight years \$263,708,033 of imports were admitted duty-free, being three millions more than half of the whole importation. In these years, also, there was an excess of expenditure over income of \$28,577,545 48; and, upon the assembling of the 27th Congress, there was a public debt of \$18,000,000. The Secretary of the Treasury, in his report at the Extra Session of 1842, estimated the deficit for the current financial year at \$14,000,000. The stock of the Federal Government was selling below par, and the Secretary of the Treasury in vain endeavored to negotiate a new loan. The credit of the Government was at such a low ebb that no capitalist was willing to risk an investment in its stock. Such was the wretched condition to which a false and destructive policy had reduced the Government and the people. There was no longer any excuse for delay in adopting measures of remedial legislation. The Government wanted money and the people relief from bankruptcy.

Beyond the immediate wants of the Federal Government, there was a vast manufacturing capital which had grown up under the Tariff system which needed protection against the excessive importations that were crushing all branches of American industry. The paper manufacture, with its six hundred paper mills, employing a capital of \$16,000,000, and producing about that amount, and affording support to fifty thousand persons, required protection against the cheap labor of France, Germany, and Italy. The cotton manufacture, which has grown up since 1816, and which now consumes three hundred thousand bales of cotton, and employs a capital of \$25,000,000, and turns out, annually, one hundred and fifty millions yards, of the value of \$16,000,000, also deserved the fostering care of Government.

The wool growers—an interest owning twenty millions of sheep, of the value of \$40,000,000, whose product amounts to fifty millions of pounds, the investment of which is estimated at \$125,000,000, also justly claimed the consideration of an American Congress.

The sugar interest of Louisiana, producing annually seventy millions of pounds—the leather and shoe business, whose annual production is valued at \$50,000,000, and which employs one hundred thousand persons—the great iron interest, whose annual yield rises to \$25,000,000, and which employs 51,405 laborers, to whom it yearly pays the sum of \$18,762,990 in wages—the salt manufacture, with its capital of \$6,998,045, and the grand aggregate capital of \$400,000,000 invested in mining—the mechanic arts and manufactures—were all submitted to the guardian care of the Congress of 1842. That body would have been faithless to its high trusts—false to all the impulses of patriotic duty—and criminally reckless of the welfare of the American people, had it sacrificed this vast amount of American capital to the delusive theories of Free Trade, by refusing to that system of protective duties under which it had grown up and developed its vast powers of production.

It was with a view to sustain these great interests, to which the community had been invited by the policy recommended by Washington, and pursued since the foundation of the Government, and to rescue the national credit from dishonor, and to provide means for the payment of the public debt, that the Tariff act of 1842 was passed. This act was framed with the purpose of meeting all these objects. The beneficial effects of this redeeming measure are in the highest degree creditable to the sagacity, foresight, and enlightened patriotism of its projectors—the Whig Congress of 1842. Let it stand untouched—suffer it to continue its work of regeneration—and we shall again the country restored to prosperity, and every vestige of national debt swept away.

## INJURIOUS EFFECTS OF THE NEW TARIFF.

I am opposed to any change in the present Tariff, until we have practical evidence of the evils which its enemies predict of it. Several of the proposed modifications, in the bill before the House, will have a disastrous influence upon certain manufactures, and may utterly destroy them. I refer to its effects on paper, the annual production of which amounts to two millions of dollars, consuming two hundred millions of pounds of rags, of which one hundred and fifty millions of pounds are furnished from this country. The present duty on paper is about 40 per cent. on the best quality—the duty proposed, 30 per cent. ad valorem.

As the French laws prohibit the exportation of rags, and as labor in that country is cheaper than in America by about four-fifths, the American workman receiving a dollar for that for which the Frenchman is paid twenty cents, it follows, of course, that paper can be produced more cheaply in France than in this country. Under the proposed rates of duty, French paper could be sold in this country at an average of ten cents, which would drive the American at twelve and a half cents out of the market. Under this new duty of 30 per cent., German paper could be sold here at \$2.27 1/2 per ream, while the American costs \$2.75. With the entire command that these low prices would give the French and Germans of our markets, the American manufacture would be destroyed.

Pass this bill, and you will, indeed, reduce the price of paper, but will this be any compensation for the destruction of so much American capital, for the annihilation of a branch of industry yearly increasing in production and value, and which engages in its operations so many thousands of our population? Pass this bill, and you will enrich the manufacturers of Italy, France, and Germany, but you will destroy sixteen millions of domestic capital, you will deprive fifty thousand persons and their dependant families of the means of honest livelihood, and you will render this country dependant for the material by which the Press scatters its light among the people, upon the capricious and unstable supply of foreign manufacturers.

The injurious effects of Free Trade are very plainly demonstrated in the iron manufacture. From 1833 to 1842, during which period railroad iron was imported free of duty, the price was kept up at a high rate, having risen from \$34.37 per ton in 1832, to \$59.37 in 1840. After 1840, the demand ceased from this country and the price fell. In 1844, with \$25 duty per ton, the price is \$23.12. The high price of railroad iron, while it was admitted duty free, proves that, in a period of Free Trade, we are entirely at the mercy of the foreign manufacturer; and its reduction, under heavy duties, sustains the oft-asserted fact, that the duty, for the most part, falls on the producer and not the consumer.

In this interval of Free Trade, prices were kept at such rates as the English manufacturers chose. When over-production was apprehended, or the spirit of competition had overstocked the market, resolutions were passed by the ironmasters to blow out their furnaces, and thus reduce the quantity. In the English Mining Journal of January 31, 1839, we are informed that "the present state of the iron trade is very encouraging—that the wise measures which the ironmasters adopted last year, (when the demand gradually fell off in consequence of the state of affairs in America,) prevented any great reduction in the price of iron, for, by passing resolutions to blow out their furnaces, and thus reduce their make, a much healthier state of the iron trade was secured than could by possibility otherwise have been expected; and upon the resumption of American business, prices generally rose to their present very satisfactory height, £9 common bar." This extract shows the combinations resorted to in order to fleece the American consumer for the benefit of the British producer.

I am, sir, in favor of retaining the duty on railroad iron as it stands, because it keeps down the price of the foreign article, and because it affords sufficient protection to enable the American manufacturer to produce an article of as good quality and at a fair profit. Under the Tariff of 1842 there have been erected, at great expense, in Pennsylvania, several furnaces for the manufacture of railroad iron by anthracite and bituminous coal. Although not a ton of T rail has yet been made in this country, there is no doubt whatever of the complete success of these new establishments, and that

they will be able to furnish a fabric of as good quality as the English, at \$55 per ton. The duty in the present Tariff was laid to establish and encourage this new manufacture. If it is suffered to remain, it will create a large amount of new capital, and add another branch of industry to the national production.

The heavy importations of iron have contributed to that excessive exportation of specie from this country which produced the recent embarrassments in trade and the derangement of the currency. As no encouragement was afforded for the manufacture of railroad iron in this country by the Tariffs anterior to 1842, our railroads were laid entirely with British rail. We have now about eight thousand miles of railroads, each mile of which requires seventy tons; taking \$50 per ton as the average price, each mile would cost \$3,500, and the whole would amount to \$28,000,000! Every dollar of this twenty-eight millions has been expended out of the country, while we possessed the material and skill to make the same article at home! Instead of encouraging the domestic manufacture, the Government has crushed every effort in its incipient stages. In 1832, four forges were erected for producing railroad iron, but they had no sooner commenced operations than they were forced, by the suicidal policy of the Government, to extinguish their fires. The duties in the Tariff of 1842 were imposed to arrest the ruinous drain of the precious metals caused by the immense purchases of British iron, and to build up a home production. If they continue unchanged, we shall soon see our railroads laid with American iron.

It will not be pretended that the countrymen of Fulton and Whitney have not sufficient ingenuity and skill to manufacture railroad iron. Already our infant nation has taught the kingdoms of the old world the power of steam and the mode of applying it to navigation. The improvements in machinery and in the processes of manufacture in this country, keep pace with those of the most enlightened nation of Europe. In the progress of half a century, mechanical skill and intellectual power have made developments in the United States which surpass some of the proudest achievements of England in her long career of glory.

The American traveller in Europe will find just cause for patriotic pride in seeing American locomotives upon the railroads of Prussia, Austria, and Russia. While most of the European nations import their locomotives and steamboat machinery from England, and the Adriatic and Mediterranean are traversed by steamboats of English construction, bearing the Austrian, French, and Ottoman flags, such has been the superior progress of our countrymen in all that relates to the application of steam, that American locomotives are now used upon some of the English railroads. On the great Manchester road there is an engine, the product of Philadelphia skill, which, in its power of draught, speed, and strength, has not yet been equalled by British ingenuity. Why is it then, with so many evidences of American success in manufactures and the arts, under a system of prudent protection, that encouragement should not be given to the production of one of the most important of iron fabrics? Why should we be dependant on foreign countries for an article, the raw material of which exists in such abundance in the mountain ranges that traverse the States of the Union, and where it lies side by side with the inexhaustible beds of the mineral which is to render it pliable to the hand of the forgesmith? No gentleman on this floor will be bold enough to assert that the manufacture of railroad iron is beyond the capacity of his countrymen. Unless this be established, there cannot be any reason whatever for a repeal of the present duties, until the experiment be fairly tested.

The duty on railroad iron is not, as has been asserted, out of proportion to the rates on other articles. By comparing the protection afforded to the sugar planter and the iron maker, it will be seen that there is a large difference in favor of the former:

1842.					
IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED STATES.					
TONS OF IRON.	99,804	cost	\$3,390,000	U. S. duties.	\$2,039,943
TONS OF SUGAR.	99,382	cost	\$3,434,750	Ad valorem duty.	60 per cent.
Off for box and hhd.	-	-	1,000,000	-	-
			\$4,434,750		\$3,900,000
					90 per cent.

Or, in other words, the duty on Sugar is \$36 per ton, and on Railroad Iron \$25 per ton.

From this calculation, it will be seen that the sugar planter of Louisiana has a protection of 30 per cent. ad valorem more than the iron manufacturers; and that to make them equal under the Tariff of 1842, the duty on raw brown sugar should be restored to \$2 per one hundred pounds. The South has no reason to complain of the existing Tariff as oppressive and burdensome, and too partial to the Northern manufacturer, with such duties on sugar, an article exclusively of Southern production.

Had I, Mr. Speaker, no other motive for opposing the new Tariff, I should find ample reason in the inquisitorial tyranny with which it searches out the smallest manufactures as objects of its vindictive attacks. The humbler pursuits which require small capitals, and afford employment to great numbers of industrious mechanics, will be deprived of any protection, by the proposed duties, sufficient to sustain them against the overwhelming competition of foreign labor. I never could have supposed that a party, assuming to itself exclusively the attributes of Democracy, and professing such a high regard for the interests of the mechanic, would have reported a bill waging such disastrous war upon the blacksmith, the shoemaker, the hand-loom weaver, the sempstress, the tailor, and the hatter.

The duties on ready-made clothing, a manufacture which employs many hundred persons, male and female, in the district which I have the honor to represent, are to be reduced from 50 per cent. to 30 per cent.; the value to be settled by the importer, whose interest it is to depreciate as much as possible the real value of the article. This reduction will be ruinous to the American workman, who, under its operations, will soon be driven out of market and out of work, by the refuse stocks of English and French manufacture thrown into this country in such quantities as to break down our domestic establishments.

The duty on boots and booties is to be reduced to 30 per cent.; a duty which will again, as in past years, overstock the market with excessive importations from France, and cause a great loss of profit to the American shoemaker. With the depression of business that this starving rate of duty will produce, there will follow a ruinous reduction of wages among the journeyman shoemakers—a class of mechanics whose labor is of the severest kind, and eminently deserving of a liberal remuneration. I should deem myself false to every obligation of duty to my constituents, and neglectful of their interests, did I not protest in the most solemn manner against this attack upon one of their means of livelihood, and this open sacrifice of one of the most important branches of American industry.

The following table will further illustrate the effects of this new Tariff upon mechanics:

TABLE.		PRESENT DUTY.		PROPOSED DUTY	
NAMES OF ARTICLES.		Per cent.		Per cent.	
Mits, caps, binding, and hosiery,	-	30	-	20	-
Umbrellas, parasols, and sun shades,	-	30	-	25	-
Silk hats, bonnets, &c.	-	55	-	25	-
Hat bodies,	-	43	-	30	-
Hats and bonnets of vegetable substances,	-	35	-	25	-
India rubber shoes,	-	30	-	20	-
Clocks,	-	30	-	20	-
Untarred cordage,	-	188	-	30	-
Iron cables and chains,	-	80	-	30	-
Cut and wrought spikes,	-	82	-	30	-
Cut nails,	-	43	-	30	-
Brass kettles, (hammered),	-	43	-	30	-
Japanned, painted, and gilt ware,	-	30	-	25	-
Cutlery of all kinds,	-	30	-	25	-
Sole leather,	-	53	-	25	-
Calf skins,	-	37	-	25	-
Bricks and paving tiles,	-	25	-	15	-
Metal buttons,	-	30	-	25	-
Hard soap,	-	51	-	30	-
China ware,	-	30	-	20	-

From a review of this table, it would be supposed that the Committee of Ways and Means had drawn up their bill expressly for the benefit of the foreign mechanic, and that in their opinion it would be much better to supply ourselves with cheap foreign importations than to support the American laborer. To every manufacture, which has made much progress in Great Britain, the products of which are now poured into all the markets of the world, the committee evince a strong partiality. For the sake of encouraging the consumption of foreign fabrics, the duty on coarse cottons is reduced from 120 per cent. to 30 per cent.; on woollen fabrics, from 40 to 30 per cent.; on carpets, treble grain, from 87 to 30 per cent.; on cotton bagging, from 53 to 30 per cent.; on oil cloths, from 30 to 10 per cent.; on window glass, 8 by 10, from 62 to 30 per cent.; on 12 by 16, from 165 to 30 per cent.; on gunpowder, from 51 to 30 per cent.; on pins, from 53 and 59 to 30 per cent.; on manufactured rolled iron, from \$25 to \$20 per ton; anchors, from 44 to 30 per cent.; iron cast vessels, from 45 to 30 per cent.; pig iron, from 76 to 56 per cent.; on lead, in pigs, from 66 to 30 per cent., &c.

By the proposed reduction of the duties on woollen cloths to 25 per cent., the American manufacturer will pay on his wool precisely the same duty which the English manufacturer pays on his cloth exported to this country.

The woollen manufacture requires encouragement, and cannot well flourish under a lower rate of protection. In coarse woollens we have, since 1815, made such progress as to supply the home demand at fair prices, and to ship considerable quantities to foreign countries. In the finer articles of woollen manufacture, the English, French, and Germans, still successfully compete with us. Should the present duties be continued for a period of years, American broadcloths will be produced of equal quality with the best fabrics of foreign looms. The importation of woollen manufactures in 1836 was \$21,080,000, and in 1842, \$8,375,725, less \$12,704,728—a diminution which very clearly indicates the progress of the home manufacture under the fostering influence of protective duties.

These reductions sufficient to demonstrate the anti-American tendencies of this new bill—a bill which, if rumor be credible, was framed in accordance with the views of the British importers, whom the Committee called to their counsels, to the exclusion of the American merchant, whose unyielding patriotism had no suggestions to make of measures inimical to the well-being of his country and the prosperity of his fellow-citizens.

## FREE TRADE AND PROTECTION COMPARED.

The 12th section of the Tariff bill before the House declares that all ad valorem duties, exceeding 25 per cent. shall be reduced to that rate on and after September 1, 1845. Twenty-five per cent. is the maximum of protection the committee can afford, no matter how necessary a higher duty may be to the support of certain manufactures, and to the preservation of a just balance of trade. The committee regard protection as a mere accidental question, that may be disregarded without any public detriment. Revenue, I admit, ought to be the leading principle in the formation of any Tariff. Next to revenue, however, the adjustment of the Tariff, so as to prevent a constant drain of specie—to guard against a frequent excess of imports over exports, and to preserve a fair equality of trade—is a consideration of the highest importance.

How is this object to be attained, but by the encouragement of domestic manufactures, which, contributing to the supply of the wants of our population, will obviate the dangers of large imports? The development of American industry, the creation of capital to carry on its operations, the stimulus that it gives to trade, the distribution of wealth and comfort that it promotes, deserve the attention of every statesman who desires to see this country prosperous, rich, and independent. Without protection—with Free Trade in full operation from 1789 to the present time, what would have been the condition of the United States? What was our colonial history under this system?—The Colonies were not allowed by Great Britain to engage in any manufactures; their trade which, by certain arbitrary laws, was chiefly confined to the mother country, consisted in the exchange of raw products for manufactured goods. I need not refer to the tyrannical edicts by which all attempts at establishing manufactures in the Colonies were suppressed, or to the declaration of Lord Chatham, that he did not wish to see America able even to manufacture a job nail. The hostility of England to American industry, was one of the list of grievances that drove our ancestors to the Revolutionary war of freedom—a war alike for personal liberty, and commercial and manufacturing independence.

What the history of the Colonies was under this system, would have been ours had it existed to the present day. Then, as in recent times, when in operation, it drained the country of the precious metals, left it without any metallic basis for its currency, and kept it poor and dependant. "Those that are acquainted with America know, as I do," said Capt. Luttrell, in a debate in Parliament, "that from Rhode Island, northwards, they have no money; that their trade is generally carried on by barter, from the most opulent merchant to the most necessitous husbandman. Sir, before your fleets and armies visited their coasts, you might almost as soon have raised the dead as one hundred pounds in specie from any individual in these provinces." We have witnessed similar results, whenever the principles of Free Trade have been introduced into the Tariff. In the three years preceding 1818, it produced an excess of imports over exports of \$75,000,000, leaving a balance of trade against the U. States of \$25,000,000 annually. The \$70,000,000 of excess of imports from 1836 to 1839, and the scarcity of specie during that period, were the natural fruits of this self-sacrificing policy.

The history of Portugal furnishes an illustration of the pernicious effects of the absence of protective duties, as disastrous as that of the American Colonies. In the year 1681, the woollen manufacture was established in Portugal, and flourished so successfully that both Portugal and Brazil were entirely supplied with its fabrics, the raw material for which was wholly drawn from Spain and Portugal. In 1684, the importation of all foreign woollen cloths was prohibited. Under this system Portugal was a flourishing kingdom, with the balance of trade in her favor, and exporting largely to other countries. In 1703 a treaty was concluded with Great Britain, by which it was stipulated that English woollen fabrics should not be subject to a higher duty than 23 per cent. In the very first year of this treaty, Portugal was deluged with English woollens, and the balance of trade turned against her. Previous to this treaty, the coins of Portugal were rarely seen in England. After it had taken effect, there was an annual balance in favor of England of \$4,444,000. "During the twenty years prohibition," says an English writer, "the Portuguese succeeded so well in their woollen manufactures, that we brought thence no gold nor silver; but after the taking off that prohibition, we brought away so much of their silver as to leave them very little for their necessary occasions, and then we began to bring away their gold. Before the treaty, not such a thing as a Portugal piece was seen in England; or, if it was, it was almost as great a curiosity as our medals."

In contrast with this short-sighted legislation, let me refer you, Mr. Speaker, to the uniform policy of England from the time of Edward III, when she brought her woollen manufacture into existence, under prohibitory duties, down more to modern times. I shall not run down the long line of her history to trace her adherence to the protective system—it is too well known to require extended comment. The defence of her industry against East India fabrics, will illustrate it sufficiently for my purpose. In 1787 she had \$5,000,000 invested in cotton manufacture, which was yielding a profitable return on the outlay, and a large annual product. The prosperity of this business was suddenly checked by the importations of East India cotton goods, which were sold at 20 per cent. less than the British. Did England, on this occasion, practically adopt the maxim of her great apostle of Free Trade? "If a foreign country can supply us with a commodity cheaper than we ourselves can make it, better buy of them." No, sir, an act of Parliament was immediately passed imposing a duty of fifty pounds for every hundred pounds of the true value of East India cotton manufactures, according to the gross price at which goods were sold at the public sales of the company, trading to the East Indies. In 1798 this duty was increased to £122 4s. 5d. for every hundred pounds of the original cost—a duty virtually prohibitory. The effect of this self-defensive legislation are visible in the great capital of \$175,000,000 invested in cotton manufacture, and in its rapid progress from 1764, when the imports of cotton wool did not amount to four millions of pounds, whereas they now exceed the prodigious amount of four hundred and fifty millions of pounds.

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